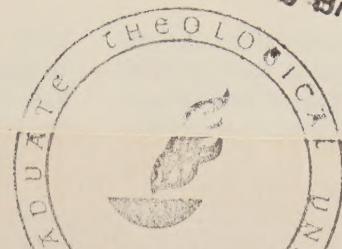


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The Great Differential

Carl Q. Lee

We are living in a time in which knowledge is being increased at anoundingly rapid rate. There have been many breakthroughs in areas of science that have opened up vast areas of development, and that bright up the magnificent future that exists as far as science and the expansion of science is concerned. We are aware of the breakthrough that was brought about in the field of nuclear explosives, and the potential that is in existence there. The business of minuturization is another factor in this development. And the privilege recently of visiting

a telephone manufacturing company where it was pointed out that in the past seven years there has been a ratio of one to fifteen in reduction size of the components that go into our telephone system. This is merely a scratching the surface in this area. The communications system is such that can physically be in any part of the world within twenty-four hours, and where there is telephone

or radio we can have instant contact throughout the world. Somebody, and this seems rather archaic now as I say it, pointed out that their great grandmother crossed the continent of the United States from east to west and it took six months. When she returned to visit relatives she traveled by railroad and it took six days; her daughter flew out to California for her funeral in six hours. Today I guess you can do it even faster than that.

Great Gains in Scientific Achievement

A demonstration of communications has been given to us as we have observed Mr. Kissinger in his numerous diplomatic assignments. How many places he has been around the world in the past year endeavoring to carry out a policy of our President which is designed to bring about peace, to bring some kind of toleration amongst nations. One day we find he is in Peking, another day in Tokyo, another in Saigon, Hanoi, Paris, New York or Washingt-

ton. Further there are things on the drawing boards that stagger the imagination away beyond anything we can comprehend at the moment. We have lived in an age in which we have projected men through space, and put their footprints on the moon. I remember the night the first moon landing was made. We were in Door County and it was one of those cloudless moonlit nights where it seems you can almost pick the stars from the sky. After I had watched on television the men debark from their lunar landing vehicle I went outside and looked up at the moon. It was almost impossible to realize that men were there walking around and doing things their project had outlined for them to do. Frankly, it was hard to grasp that this was actually happening. We have projected earth-made sounds and earth-made stimuli so far into outer space that it is impossible to state the figures and have any kind of comprehension of what the dis-

tance is. So we could go on and on relating the miracles of science. The breakthroughs that have been made have projected us into a scientific age that beggars description. It is certainly beyond my capacity to describe.

What does this all mean? What am I talking about? I am talking about an age that has come into a kind of scientific maturity, certainly not yet complete maturity, but which has opened up vistas beyond our comprehension. We have developed things that will bring comfort and sustenance and ease to mankind, things that will make life more endurable. And in the finding of these things we have also discovered something else. We have developed scientifically means by which we can destroy this old world of ours. I know it sounds rather like a cliché to say that man can reach out and press a button and destroy the world, but that is just about what exists today. The potentials are there.

Scientific Maturity Minus Spiritual Immaturity Equals the Great Differential

The great differential lies in the fact that we who have these magnificent and wonderful things in our hands to make a good world to live in, or to destroy it, do not have the spiritual capacity to handle that which our brains have given to us. Somebody once described it in terms of putting a loaded shotgun into the hands of a three-year-old child. We have not yet dispensed with hunger, or with the exploitation of human beings. We have not gotten rid of what they are pleased to call ghettos, or slums in our big cities. We haven't discovered how to distribute the sufficient bounties of earth so that all men can have plenty. We haven't found how to equalize the material things of this world so that each could have that which would make life comfortable. We have in no way with all of our scientific development achieved any kind of maturity in terms of human relationships. Men are still riven by sin, distorted and torn by selfishness, and a spiritual lag. The great differential that exists between what we have found in terms of scientific development, and what we have achieved in terms of spiritual maturity, leave a gap that at the moment seems almost unbridge-

able. Why is this? Ah, yes, it is easy to point the finger and say there has been failure here, there has been failure there. God have mercy on us! mankind has failed. God made an effort, a Divine effort to close the gap between what man could find out about creation and knowledge of the Creator — He revealed Himself to us in the Person of Jesus of Nazareth.

"Ye Must Be Born Again"

There was a starlit night in which two men got together. One man was Jesus of Nazareth, the other was a Pharisee and a member of the Sanhedrin, Nicodemus by name. I have mentioned this before and I mention it again, that I have heard those who say Nicodemus was a coward, and perhaps in his cowardice a hypocrite because he was afraid to confront Jesus during the daytime. In my opinion this is ridiculous. Jesus was surrounded by crowds during the day, and no conversation could have been held that would not have been interrupted. Nicodemus needed some answers, and I believe he came to Jesus when he could find those answers without interruption. *We know that Thou art a teacher come from God, for no man can do these miracles that Thou doest except God be with him.* And I can imagine that Jesus leaned forward toward Nicodemus and He said, *Except a man be born again he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.* That raised some questions in Nicodemus' mind.

Here is where the great differential exists. Too many people hurling plans at the world to correct its wrongs think that man, unregenerate, unsaved, unchanged, can accomplish the things that are so vitally necessary to bring about a correction of the evils that exist in our world today in terms of human relationships. Oh, yes, the plans are magnificent, they are well put together, they are scientifically drawn up, but one essential factor is forgotten and that is the basic selfishness of unregenerate human beings. As long as that factor remains in the equation there is going to be hunger, there is going to be exploitation, there are going to be slums. There is going to be political corruption, hypocrisy and all of the things that tend to destroy, distort,

disturb and upset the basic human relationships that should exist between men and God. Herein lies the differential. Until men recognize that their hearts must be changed, that they must have a commitment of mind and life and heart to Jesus Christ, Who is God manifested in the flesh, there will be no change in the basic human relationships, and man will not be able to handle efficiently this which science has brought to him. You can talk about racial discrimination, about exploitation, about all the evils of mankind, but they will remain unchanged until the human heart is changed, and the human heart will remain unchanged until the Lord Jesus Christ enters therein, and there occurs that which we are pleased to call, from that third chapter of John, *the New Birth.*

We Have All Sinned and Come Short of the Glory of God

God have mercy on the Church! God have mercy on you and me who comprise the fellowship of this Church! How frequently in our lives do we find the ugly head of selfishness rearing itself within us. We have made a commitment to Jesus Christ, yes, and thanks be to God for that commitment. We can profess that we are born again. Thanks be to God! But there is imperfection within us that should prompt us to daily fall down upon our knees before God and cry out, *God be merciful to me, a sinner!* Even in our commitment to Jesus Christ we can make no claim for ourselves. Even in our profession that He is within our hearts, unfortunately because of our imperfections ugly selfishness will rear itself and make itself evident. However, this does not change the fact that we should continually persist in a renewal of our commitment to God. We should persist in a constant rededication, pleading with God to enter into us to cleanse us and make us what He would have us to be in spirit, in soul and in body. It is true that that happening within this little congregation might not make a great impression upon the world at large. But once again I would remind you that two thousand years ago a hundred and twenty people, considerably less than are here present, gathered in an upper room to talk and to think about an experience that they had

for three previous years when they had been privileged to walk with Jesus of Nazareth Whom they knew had risen from the dead. One Who had instructed them, He ascended to the Father, to remain in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit should come. On this Day of Pentecost they were talking, praying, communing one with another; suddenly the Holy Spirit came and upon them all. That hundred and twenty composed of houses, fishermen, children, carpenters, a very ordinary cross-section of mankind became a force, a power, imperfect as they were as man beings, that changed the course of history.

Imperfect Humans Become A Power When Filled By The Holy Spirit

I wonder what would happen if seven to nine hundred people were present, by their commitment to Almighty God, could suddenly come a receiving receptacle of the working and power of the Holy Spirit! What would happen in this world of ours? What would happen in terms of the whole Christian church if there could be that kind of commitment that would open the hearts of those who claimed to be followers of Jesus Christ, and admit an occupancy of the Holy Spirit, so that He could use them as an instrument of God to change the world? I think we would suddenly see the gap bridged. Ah yes, God has given to men gifts, gifts of intelligence, gifts of logic, gifts of reason, capacities to delve into the most secrets of the Creation. If they would only look to the Creator — *The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us*, the Word that is Creator of all things, the Word that manifested itself in the Person of Jesus of Nazareth. If we could only come to know Him, as we presently know His Creation, then indeed the great differential would cease to exist.

God knows what the future holds. I know that one day our Lord will return. I know that one day, and pray God it may be soon, we will see Him as He is. I hope and pray that our spiritual eyes are so open, our spiritual hearts are so ready for His occupancy, that seeing Him as He is we will be like Him. I know that when He comes we will establish His Kingdom. I know that when that Kingdom is

established men will beat their spears into pruning hooks, and their swords into ploughshares and will learn war no more. How strange those words sound today. I know that in that day every man will dwell under his own vine and fig tree and they will not hurt nor destroy in all of His holy mountain. The ox and the ass and the lion will lie down together. Indeed, then the great differential will be eliminated, the spiritual gap will be closed, the spiritual lag will be gone. I pray that in the interim you and I who are committed to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord will continue to pray that our commitment may become deeper, more profound, more complete, that we shall indeed be the instruments of God's

hand that He can use in establishing His Kingdom upon earth.

Yes, we have tremendous capacities, tremendous potentials in terms of the Creation. The things I have mentioned did not even scratch the surface of scientific development. Many of you know much more about this than I. The thing that I do know is that there still exists the great differential. God help us to do everything we can under the moving and power of the Holy Spirit, that within our lives, within our hearts, there shall be a closing of that gap, to the end that our knowledge of Creation will be matched by our knowledge of the Creator.

Which Way Are You Going?

Roger Ottersen

Life is often referred to as a journey. This is done frequently in literature, in poetry, and, of course, in the Scriptures. Each person by his decision determines his ultimate destiny. God has given to us the privilege to decide for ourselves which way we want to go. And since this is true I think we need to ask from time-to-time the question, *Which way am I going?*

As we journey along life's pathway, basically speaking, we have the privilege and prerogative to decide which direction we are going to follow. There comes a time when we reach a fork in the road. The fork causes us to make a decision, we either must go one way or another. It is my prayer and desire that this message might prove a fork in the road for some.

The Way That Seemeth Right — The Way That Is Right

In the Old Testament book of Proverbs we read, *There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful; and the end of that mirth is heaviness. The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways: and a good man shall be satisfied from himself* (Proverbs 14:12-14). As we face this fork in the road of life I wonder are we will-

ing to go God's way, or do we want to go our way? The reason we cannot trust *our way* is because our heart is wicked. The Scripture says, *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked* (Jeremiah 17:9). That is why it is a little disturbing for me to hear someone say of another, "They are doing this wrong, or some other thing wrong, but their heart is right." The New Testament teaches us that we cannot trust our conscience because our conscience has been seared. This type of fork in the road decision faces all people. In Matthew 7:13, 14 a portion of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, *Enter ye in at the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in that way: Because narrow is the gate and hard is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*

Let us talk about the fork in the road that God has given to us, the decision that is ours as individuals. Before our Christian experience (our acceptance of Jesus Christ) we must decide which basic route we are going to take — God's way or our way (the road that leads to heaven or the road to hell). Jesus tells us something about the road to heaven, God's way. He mentions

the strait gate. It is a gate that is not easy to enter, it is difficult because of sin. And if we know the Scriptures we know that Jesus Christ is the Door to that road. *I am the Door* (John 10:7). This means that it is narrow. It may at times seem to be a life with some limitations upon it. But truly the paradox of the Christian faith is this, we never have full freedom until we become subject to Christ. This is the kind of freedom that can be enjoyed by a couple that love each other in marriage. Freedom of heart and freedom of love is a freedom that comes about under subjection, not a subjection of fear, not a subjection of force, but a subjection of love. And when we as a man or a woman are willing to subject ourselves to the one we love we find freedom, freedom in oneness, in unity and fellowship. The road to heaven must be entered through a strait and narrow way, and as the Word says there are few that find it, but it leads to life eternal. I might add this is the *only way* to life eternal, through Jesus Christ. *I am the Way the Truth and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father but by Me.*

By Faith We Know And Are Known Of Him

It should not surprise us that the majority of people are not professing Christians. It should not even surprise us that there are some who profess to be believers but may not be. This is what Jesus was speaking about in Matthew 7:21 – *Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* He turned to some and said, *I know you not!* What a contrast to John chapter 10 where He tells us the Shepherd knows the sheep by name, not by a number. I am more than a number to God, I am a person. He knows them by name because they belong to Him, they are a part of the fold. Repentance and faith in Christ have never been generally popular or the accepted thing to do. Christians are often called narrow-minded or peculiar. I am afraid one of the biggest problems with the church today is that we are not peculiar enough, and again I use the word peculiar not in the sense of being odd or queer, but peculiar in the sense that we show the world there is something in us that is not in the

world, we have something worth living for. The Bible says that we are a people set apart, a special people, we belong to God. Faith in Christ has never been fashionable with the world. Being a follower of Christ should not turn us into a narrow-minded, bigoted type of person. Personally I like to think of myself as being rather broad-minded, but there are a few things in life I am narrow-minded about, and one of them happens to be my family. I am married to a wife that I love and I will not share her with others. I am pretty narrow-minded about that. I am sure many of you would agree with me on that point. If we are to walk the way of faith the world will call us narrow-minded.

The Two Ways

Jesus said there are two ways to walk through life, the one is the road that leads to heaven, and the other ends up in hell. One is God's way and the other is our way. We enter the broad way through a variety of interests that are not necessarily bad in themselves, but can become bad when we substitute something lesser for the best. The road to hell is the easy way. It's going along with the tide instead of trying to face it. It's giving in to all the immoral standards instead of standing up and being counted.

Those of us who have studied the Old Testament remember reading time and again that the people *did what was right in their own eyes.* There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, and then there is the way, Jesus Christ, Who said, *I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.* Going my way, going your way might be going the way of compromise by giving lip service to Jesus Christ, attending church when it is convenient, but in reality it may only be a cover-up. Inwardly we might be saying, "I will not have Him to rule over me." In Deuteronomy 30:19 we hear God speaking to His people: *I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore, choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live.*

I wish I could end the message right here but I can't. Perhaps you are saying in your mind, "I made that decision for Christ many years ago, many months ago. I started down God's way. I by faith accept-

ed the gift of His grace. I decided to follow God's way." Even if this is true we all need to ask ourselves the same question. Which way am I going? After our Christian experience of faith in Christ we are still given a choice, and I think we need to consider this choice of direction. Are we following the road of obedience or the road of disobedience?

To Obey Or Not To Obey

In the Old Testament we find two prime examples of disobedience and obedience. One man that perfectly portrays the disobedience of a child of God is Jonah. *But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord* (Jonah 1:3). God called Jonah to go to Ninevah but he chose the road of disobedience, he decided he would rather go somewhere else. Instead of going to Ninevah he went to Tarshish. I read a little article on this subject which I would like to quote to you: "It was not his going to Tarshish that was so wrong, but it was his going where the Lord had directed him not to go that brought about God's judgement upon the wayward prophet. Tarshish may have been a better city than Ninevah but it was no place for a man who was commissioned to go somewhere else. The real question is not which is the better of two opportunities before me, but rather where is God directing me? It's like rising up from the presence of the Lord to go somewhere other than where He indicates He wants us." Jonah knew what God wanted him to do, but Jonah wanted to walk the road of disobedience, and as a result got himself into a lot of trouble. Then perhaps for the one who typifies in a beautiful way obedience, we might consider Abraham. In Hebrews 11:8 we read: *By faith Abraham, when he was called out obeyed; and he went out not knowing whither he went.* God explained to Jonah what He wanted him to do, but with Abraham it was not so. Abraham, *By faith . . . when he was called . . . obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.* Obedience to God's way is always the way the believer should go. If we want victory in our Christian life, and if we desire to be closer to the Lord, it takes obedience to God. It's better to do what God wants of us than to try to impress other people.

Now it's my duty to ask you the question again as I ask it of myself. Which way are we going? Are we backslding or growing in grace. What about marriage and family relationships? Are they deepening a love and unity of life, or are we finding ourselves drifting apart with no unity? Which way are you going in your business and social contacts? Are your ties stronger and more ethical than they were before, or is your Christian witness waning. Which way are you going in your church loyalty and service? Do you have a stronger love for Christ and His Church today, or are you less interested than before? Jesus gave us the decision that must be made concerning the final destiny of our life — the road to heaven which is narrow and perhaps a little difficult, or the broad way which leads to destruction? Once we by faith have trusted Christ as Savior then there must be the continued asking in our mind — which way am I going? If you are not as close to God today as you once were, you need not ask who moved. God's love for you is just as strong as it ever was. God's desire for fellowship with you and with me is just as great as it has ever been. If you are not very close to God today I call upon you to hear His voice and decide the way of obedience.

Going His Way

The answer to the problem of disobedience and sin is repentance, but the trouble with too many of us Christians is that when we are caught in an act of wrongdoing we try to cover-up, or condone, or rationalize it away. The prophet Jeremiah said something which is well worth remembering: *Why then doth this people of Jerusalem slidden back by perpetual backslding? they hold fast deceit, they refuse to return. I hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright: no man repented him of his wickedness.* (Jeremiah 8:5, 6). They were unwilling to acknowledge sin in their lives. David when he cried out to God for mercy and forgiveness said: *Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation.* He said, *Against Thee, thee only, have I sinned and done this evil (unrighteousness, wickedness).* I am reminded of the publican who cried out. "Have mercy on me!" Also the words of the Apostle

John: If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

My friend, you know your life and you know it better than anyone else. I would encourage you and plead with you to ask yourself the question — Which way am I going? If you have never yet come to that fork in the road where you have made a decision either to follow God and His Son Jesus Christ, and trust Him as Lord and Savior, or to follow your own way, you need to face that decision today. And those of us who have made this decision somewhere in our life, at camp, or at Sunday School, around the family altar, we need to evaluate our life. What is your desire? The little chorus says:

I have decided to follow Jesus,
No turning back, no turning back.

I urge you to follow His way. *Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you*

rest. Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out. He promises forgiveness! He promises cleansing! He promises peace!

Savior, 'tis a full surrender,
All I leave to follow Thee;
Thou my Leader and Defender
From this hour shalt ever be.

As I come in deep contrition,
At this consecrated hour,
Hear, O Christ, my heart's petition,
Let me feel the Spirit's power!

No withholding — full confession!
Pleasures, riches, all must flee;
Holy Spirit, take possession!
I no more, but Thou in me.

Oh, the joy of full Salvation!
Oh, the peace of love Divine!
Oh, the bliss of consecration!
I am His, and He is mine.

My friend won't you decide to go His way? Take your hand off the controls of your life and say today in the quietness of this hour, Lord, take me and help me to walk your way!

I Am The Life!

Arnold M. Studebaker, Jr.

In John chapter 14, verse 6 we read these words of our Lord, *I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.* Jesus said, *I am the Life.* Of all the claims and teachings of Christ, this one was probably the most intriguing to the multitudes who gathered to hear Him preach. Few facts boggle the mind of man quite like the reality of death; and nothing teases his intellect like the possibility of avoiding it! Accordingly, Christ's claim to Life and His claim to Divinity become inseparable to our instinctive logic. If He is Divine, as He claimed, He can give us Life. If He can give us Life, as He claimed, then He is Divine. The reality of these two principles becomes the motivating force of Christianity, and the heart of the Gospel. It is a reality which must be accepted at least partially by faith; for neither Life nor Divinity lend themselves to scientific analysis. Nevertheless, Jesus came expressly to do the works of the Father, as He stated Himself in verse 10 of the same chapter. And the works were

intended as evidence that Jesus spoke the truth. I believe one of the finest examples of this point is found in the story of Lazarus, John chapter 11. Let us first take a look at verses 1-4:

Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.

(It was that Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.)

Therefore, his sisters sent unto Him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick.

When Jesus heard that, He said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.

Jesus Knew The Future By Faith

Notice here three things about Jesus. Firstly, He knew the future. He knew that Lazarus was very ill,

but He predicted that the illness would not result in death. Secondly, Jesus recognized that this illness had occurred for a purpose. It was not just a whim of fate, not "just one of those things." This would suggest that for the individual who places his faith in Christ, even ordinary events such as illness can have a purpose in God's total plan. Thirdly, Jesus saw this man's illness as an opportunity for God to bring glory to Himself and to His Son. That is a difficult idea to understand at first, but we will see what can be done with it.

Next I would like you to notice something special about these sisters, Mary and Martha. The first thing they did when their brother Lazarus fell ill was to send for Jesus. They told *Him* their problem. They asked *Him* to help. Professor Paul E. Little of the Trinity Divinity School made the point rather well in a recent article in *Decision* magazine,

Sometimes people say, 'There's nothing else we can do but pray,' as though all the practical things have been done and now we can only turn to the impractical. Actually prayer should be our highest priority.

For Mary and Martha, it was!

Jesus Was Needed and Sent For

The Bible's version of this story, the one we are familiar with, continues the narrative from Jesus' point of view. This is probably because the account was written by John, and John was with Jesus during this time.

I would like for a moment to break with the *facts* and venture into the *possible*. Let us try to see this situation from Mary and Martha's point of view. The village of Bethany where Mary and Martha lived with their brother was less than two miles outside of the city of Jerusalem. Their home was a convenient and frequent resting place for Jesus and His disciples. Since Jesus' primary ministry was in their area, He normally could have been reached rather easily in case of emergency. Unfortunately for Mary and Martha, Jesus had left Jerusalem and taken refuge beyond the Jordan River. It seems He had angered the Jews at the temple in

Jerusalem a few weeks before, by claiming to be one with God and they had tried to stone Him. So it was that when Lazarus became seriously ill, it was necessary for his sisters to summon a messenger and send him to seek Jesus.

Imagine, if you can, their desperation. Their brother lay very ill, and was failing fast. Jerusalem had no emergency squad. There was no hospital. They had no telephone. They did have physicians, but their skill and knowledge were limited. And even they had to be called by messenger and then walk to the patient's home. But the sisters knew of one person they could depend upon, and that was Jesus! They believed He was the Son of God. Indeed, they believed Him actually to be God. They knew He could heal Lazarus, because they had seen Him heal hundreds before. But even Jesus had to be sent for via a messenger. I am sure the sisters enquired for the swiftest young man in Bethany. Perhaps they offered him a little bonus if he could complete the trip in record time. How long was he gone? Two days? Three days? I am sure it must have seemed ages to the sick man and his sisters. When the messenger finally returned, they asked him, "Did you find the Lord?" He must have replied, "Yes, I found Him where John used to baptize his disciples." Their hopes rose, as they asked, "Is He coming right away?" "No," he replied, "I don't think He's coming at all. Thomas said their lives were in danger here. They never could risk it." At this point the sisters knew the most terrible feeling a human being can experience — the feeling of being forsaken by God — the feeling of being let down — a suspicion, perhaps, of betrayal. But by this time Lazarus was much worse. There was no time to lose. They must do what they could. Perhaps they paid the messenger his bonus and sent him scurrying to Jerusalem — to look for the best doctor he could find — fast! Of course, we don't know that a doctor ever saw Lazarus but it is possible. It could even have been Doctor Luke. In any case, the doctor might have arrived in Bethany about sundown. Maybe he took one look at Lazarus and knew he was much too late. I am certain he would have felt quite helpless as the midnight hour approached, and he

had to inform the sisters there was nothing more he could do, their brother was gone.

Death, and the Loss of a Loved One

What thoughts do you suppose were in the hearts of Mary and Martha during the rest of that long and terrible night? Yes, they believed in God. True, they believed in life-after-death. But do you suppose they were tempted to ask, "why?" Why was Lazarus taken? He was so young, and his family depended upon him. Why couldn't it have been Annas, the aged high priest, who was a crook anyway? He had lived a long and luxurious life. Why shouldn't he have been taken? Why should Lazarus die? He was such a good man, an upstanding citizen of the community and the state. He was law-abiding. He was religious. He was even a devout follower of the Christ. What had he done to deserve to die? Why wasn't Judas taken instead? Judas, the crafty one. The self-serving one. The one who was at that very moment plotting secretly against his Master. Furthermore, if there really was a God, why did He even let anyone die? Yes, it is possible Lazarus' loved ones were tempted to think such thoughts just as we might be when confronted by such a loss. Yet the Bible bears no record that they felt any bitterness, only grief.

We can follow them as probably at dawn they set out to contact close friends and relatives to assist with the burden of burial. They wrapped the body of their brother in spices and strips of cloth. They laid him carefully in a cave, and closed the entrance with a stone. Some people stayed with them a few days to comfort them and to mourn for the departed. There may have been a few hired mourners there as well, as was sometimes customary at that time.

Jesus Comes

In the midst of this picture of deepest gloom, perhaps we recall Jesus' comment when He first heard that Lazarus was ill. Jesus said, "This illness came for the purpose of glorifying the Son of God." It doesn't seem to fit! But wait. We are at that point in the story where we can return to the events actually recorded in Scrip-

re; for at this precise moment in me Jesus arrived on the scene! Yes, Jesus dared to enter the vicinity of His enemies to accomplish the will of His Father. The Bible tells us that when He arrived Martha went out to meet Him, while Mary remained in the house. We read in John 11:21-27:

Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.

Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again.

Martha saith unto Him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth in Me shall never die. Believest thou this?

She saith unto Him, Yea, Lord: I believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, Who should come into the world.

Notice two things in this passage about Martha. Firstly, she presented Jesus with the big "if." If you had been here, my brother had not died. We as humans today are quite aware of the irony in our world; and Martha was aware of it. Yet notice also Martha's faith. She still believed in God. She still believed

in Jesus Christ. She still believed in His promises; she still believed Jesus had full control of the situation. Logically, she might have blamed God, or claimed that He did not exist, because her brother had died. She could have called Jesus a coward, a farce, or a cheap magician, as others do now and did then. But she didn't. Nevertheless, Jesus had promised some glory from the situation. And even as He stood near the tomb, He was saying, "I am the resurrection and the Life." We would all like very much to believe that, but our feeble faith seems to need evidence from time-to-time for support. That was just what Christ had in mind.

Lazarus Is Raised From The Dead

In verse 39, we read His words, *Take ye away the stone.* When those around Him showed reluc-

tance to follow His simple command, He repeated His promise that they should see the glory of God. Jesus then prayed a simple prayer to His Father, and gave His second command as recorded in verse 43, *Lazarus, come forth!* Amazingly, he whom they mourned walked out of his own tomb, and stood before them. I can imagine at this point a moment of complete silence, and utter stillness. Apparently no one spoke, and no one moved. Hence, Christ's next command, issued in verse 44. *Loose him and let him go.*

Yes, God did use the situation to glorify His Son. But it wasn't the sickness that brought the glory. It wasn't death that brought the glory. It wasn't even Martha's steadfast testimony in the face of tragedy which brought glory. The glory was revealed when the One Who claimed to be THE LIFE proved Himself by restoring life to a man named Lazarus, from whom life had been taken.

The Bible doesn't tell us much more about Lazarus. We know that many people came to believe on Jesus because of what happened to him. And we know that his testimony was powerful enough to put him on the Sanhedrin's list of "most-wanted, dead or alive." But we must take note of the interesting fact that Lazarus did not actually become a great preacher or miracle-worker, as some of the apostles later did. Yet the Bible says he was a "dear friend" of our Lord. That is a distinction any of us might covet!

The Ultimate Resurrection

Of course, Lazarus is not with us today and so we must conclude that he died a second time. Since he did die a second time, we must conclude also that his death and resurrection, though a tremendous demonstration of God's power, was not the resurrection Christ ultimately promises us. For many, though, it would be evidence enough, just the same. We would simply trust God to bring about the promised resurrection, and simply trust Him to make it permanent. Fortunately, we can do better than that. There is a permanent resurrection recorded in Scripture. It is the resurrection of Jesus Himself! He was brutally killed; and, like Lazarus, was wrapped up with

spices in strips of cloth, then laid in a cave with a stone sealing the entrance. He, too, was raised from the dead after several days. But He rose by His own power. No one had to roll the stone away from His tomb! No one had to call Him out! No one had to untie Him so He could go home! No one buried Him a second time and no one ever will! He now has a new body which cannot die. His resurrection is the same resurrection promised to us. The Apostle Paul explained it this way, *Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.*

The Seed Dies and Is Made Alive

Sometimes here at the school we plant seeds as a nature experiment. The seed we put in the ground looks quite dead, and certainly has none of the characteristics of the plant we hope will grow. We bury this seed in the ground, water it, and watch and wait. We watch for the firstfruits of that little seed. We watch for the first sign of green, the first little sprout. There is always great excitement when that little green leaf pokes itself above the soil. Why? Because that which seemed to be dead is alive! Our seed has kept its promise! Such was the excitement that seized the early Christians when they saw Christ raised from the dead. He Who was dead, was alive again! His promise was true! The Apostle Paul explained the significance of this in his first letter to the Corinthians. I will close with a quotation from this epistle.

But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.

For since by man came death, by man also came the resurrection of the dead.

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; and afterward they that are Christ's at His coming.

Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.

For He must reign, till He

hath put all enemies under His feet.

The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

For He hath put all things under His feet.

(I. Corinthians 15:20-27a)

THAT WHICH IS GOD'S

By Rev. Carl Q. Lee

In Jesus' time there were many factions and parties with both religious and political connotations some of which were close together in conviction and belief and others that were poles asunder. The Pharisees and Herodians were such, yet the extreme differences which they had were set aside on one occasion and their forces were combined to ensnare in His speech a radical Prophet Who had come out of Galilee, and Who was truly upsetting everything as far as they were concerned.

The Pharisees adhered closely to the Law of Moses and the interpretations which had been set up of that Law and believed firmly that Israel was indeed the chosen of God. The Herodians were inclined to go along with Rome and its innovations. They believed that it was well and good to accept the Gentile's ways.

In common, however, the two groups had their hatred of Jesus. Now they came to Him with their tricky catch-question, "Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar or not?"

ZION PASSION PLAY

Since 1935, Zion Passion Play has been presenting the graphic portrayal of the story of Salvation. Since 1968, we have been in our own Amphitheatre where this great dramatic story can be seen under the canopy of the heavens with realistic settings. The words of Jesus are heard in the Beatitudes as He spoke with Nicodemus, presenting the message of Salvation — along with these familiar words: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)

With great joy and real intimacy the children have sung the "Hosannas" in "The Triumphal Entry." We have been observers of "The Upper Room" and "The Last Supper." "The Garden of Gethsemane" reveals the supreme decision which Christ made — "Alone!"

In their minds it could be answered only one of two ways — yes or no. If Jesus answered "yes," He could be condemned by the Pharisees as being no child of the Law or follower of Moses. If he answered "no," the Herodians could condemn Him as a seditious and revolutionary, one who forbade the paying of tribute.

The One to Whom they had put the question, however, was "One greater than Solomon" and the answer He gave left them convicted of their own sin and selfishness. Asking for a coin, Jesus asked whose superscription and image it bore. They answered, "Caesar's." Jesus replied, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's."

Although the record does not state, it must have been clear to both Herodians and Pharisees that even as the coin of the realm bore the image of Caesar, so they themselves bore the image of God. The words of God: "Let Us make man in Our image," and Jesus' heart-searching command, "Render unto God the things that are God's" must have left them with a deep conviction and a compelling directive to commit themselves unto Him in Whose image they were made.

Jesus' command still rings! Yes, we render still unto Caesar that which is his, but have we surrendered ourselves to God, in Whose image we are made?

This year the attendance has grown to the Amphitheatre capacity, and comments and letters from the audience have been most gratifying. Quoting from some of our letters, we read:

I saw the play for the third time this year, this evening, and decided I must write to tell you of the blessing it gave me each time, and especially tonight. It was as though the final performance of the season was given extra care and effort. Thank you so much for this fine play and may the Lord continue, I pray, to bless your witness until He Comes!

To all who have a part in this tremendous presentation, thank you! Last Friday evening we were with a group who witnessed the performance. We have seen the Passion Play in Oberammergau, and we thought that it was the greatest, but the play you present far exceeds the one in Germany — because we feel you have honored His Word in a way that presents

"BEHOLD, THE LAMB OF GOD!"

John 1:29

Behold the Lamb, the bleeding Lamb,
Eternal God — the Great I AM!
From heaven above, He came to save
Our ruined race; His life He gave.
The Chosen One, God's well loved Son,
Has fought the fight, the vict'ry won.

O Lamb of God, how great the love
That brought Thee down from heav'n above,
To walk this earth in mortal frame,
To bear our heavy load of shame;
From sin and guilt to set us free
By dying on the accursed tree.

How could it be that mortal ear
Such words of love could ever hear —
Sinful, straying, wrecked and lost,
On life's ocean torn and tossed,
"Come unto Me, I'll give you rest,
And thou shalt be forever blest"!

O Lamb of God, Beloved Son,
I come to Thee, Thy love hath won!
For I have seen Thee on the tree
Bearing that awful load for me —
My sin, my guilt, the awful shame;
All glory to Thy Holy Name!

Michael J. Mintern

Rev. Peter B. Whitten, who served as pastor of Zion Gospel Chapel, Michigan City, Indiana, for three and a half years, completed his ministry with the church on June 10, 1973. Rev. Whitten is no longer affiliated with Zion Gospel Chapel or the Christian Catholic Church fellowship. His ordination has been rescinded.

the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and honors His Sacrifice, presenting the Way of Salvation. The tears flowed down unashamedly as Isaiah 53 was given, I had never understood it like before.

The spirit and the faithfulness of the cast have been good. It has been a real blessing to fellowship together in this way, and there is an eagerness in looking forward to another year.

A committee is functioning to improve the Amphitheatre's appearance. The hope is to enclose the stage, giving winter protection, and perhaps a new decorative screening fence, ticket booth and entrance.

Please make Zion Passion Play a matter of prayer. It is one of our greatest mission outreaches in which we can all participate. All donations are tax exempt, and can be made to the Zion Passion Play, Dowie Memorial Drive, Zion, Illinois 60099.